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Magical Grounding, Centering, and Shielding Techniques

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You may at some point hear someone in the Pagan community refer to the practices of centering, grounding, and shielding. In many traditions, it's crucial that you learn to do these before you begin working magic. Centering is essentially the foundation of energy work, and subsequently magic itself. Grounding is a way of eliminating excess energy that you may have stored up during a ritual or a working. Finally, shielding is a way to protect yourself from psychic, mental, or magical attack. Let's look at all three of these techniques, and talk about how you can learn to do them.

01 | Magical Centering Techniques

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Centering is the beginning of energy work, and if your tradition's magical practices are based upon the manipulation of energy, then you'll need to learn to center. If you've done any meditation before, it may be a bit easier for you to center, because it uses many of the same techniques. Here's how to get started.

Do keep in mind that each magical tradition has its own definition of what centering is. This is a simple exercise that can work for you, but if your magical practice has a different viewpoint of what centering is and how to

magical practice has a different viewpoint of what centering is and how to do it, try some different options.

First, find a place where you can work undisturbed. If you're at home, take the phone off the hook, lock the door, and turn off the television. You should try to do this in a seated position—and that's simply because some people fall asleep if they get too relaxed lying down! Once you're seated, take a deep breath, and exhale. Repeat this a few times, until you are breathing evenly and regularly. This will help you relax. Some people find that it's easier to regulate their breathing if they count, or if they chant a simple tone, like "Om," as they inhale and exhale. The more often you do this, the easier it will become.

Once your breathing is regulated and even, it's time to begin visualizing energy. This may seem weird if you've never done it before. Rub the palms of your hands lightly together, as though you were trying to warm them, and then move them an inch or two apart. You should still feel a charge, a tingling sensation between your palms. That's energy. If you don't feel it at first, don't worry. Just try again. Eventually, you'll start to notice that the space between your hands feels different. It's almost as though there's a bit of resistance pulsating there if you gently bring them back together.

After you've mastered this, and can tell what energy feels like, you can start playing with it. This means you can focus on that area of resistance. Close your eyes, and *feel* it. Now, visualize that tingly area expanding and contracting, like a balloon. Some people believe you can try pulling your hands apart, and stretching that energy field out as if you were pulling taffy with your fingers. Try visualizing the energy expanding to the point where it surrounds your entire body. After some practice, according to a few traditions, you'll even be able to fling it from one hand to the other, as if you were tossing a ball back and forth. Bring it into your body, and draw it inward, shaping a ball of energy inside yourself. It's important to note that this energy (in some traditions called an aura) is all around us at all times. You're not creating something new, but simply harnessing what's already there.

Each time you center, you'll repeat this process. Begin by regulating your breathing. Then focus on your energy. Eventually, you should be able to control it completely. The core of your energy can be wherever it feels most natural for you—for most people, it's ideal to keep their energy centered around the solar plexus, although others find the heart chakra to be the place where they can focus on it best.

After you've been doing this for a while, it will become second nature. You'll be able to center anywhere, any time, sitting on a crowded bus, stuck in a boring meeting, or driving down the street (although for that one, you should keep your eyes open). By learning to center, you'll develop a foundation for energy work in many different magical traditions.

02 | Magical Grounding Techniques

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Ever perform a ritual and then feel all jittery and shaky afterward? Have you done a working, only to find yourself sitting up into the wee hours of the morning, with an oddly heightened sense of clarity and awareness? Sometimes, if we fail to center properly before a ritual, we can end up a bit off-kilter. In other words, you've gone and amped up your energy level, it's been increased by magical working, and now you've got to burn some of it away. This is when the practice of grounding comes in very handy. It's a way of getting rid of some of that excess energy you've stored up. Once this is done, you'll be able to regulate yourself and feel normal again.

Grounding is fairly easy. Remember how you manipulated energy when you learned to center? That's what you'll do to ground—only instead of drawing that energy inside you, you'll push it out, into something else. Close your eyes and focus on your energy. Get it under control so that it's manageable—and then, using your hands, push it into the ground, a bucket of water, a tree, or some other object that can absorb it.

Some people prefer to fling their energy into the air, as a way of eliminating it, but this should be done with caution—if you're around other magically inclined people, one of them may inadvertently absorb what you're getting rid of, and then they're in the same position you've just been in.

Another method is to push the excess energy down, through your legs and feet, and into the ground. Focus on your energy, and feel it draining away, as though someone had pulled a plug out of your feet. Some people find it helpful to bounce up and down a bit, to help shake out the last of the excess energy.

If you're someone who needs to feel something a bit more tangible, try one of these ideas out:

Carry a stone or crystal in your pocket. When you're feeling over-energized, let the stone absorb your energy.

Make a pot of "angry dirt." Keep a pot of soil outside your door. When you need to shed that excess energy, plunge your hands into the dirt and then feel the energy transfer into the soil.

Create a catchphrase to trigger grounding—it can be something as simple as "Aaaaand it's gone!" This phrase can be used as an energy release when you need it.

03 | Magical Shielding Techniques

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If you've spent any time in the metaphysical or Pagan community, you've probably heard people use the term "shielding." Shielding is a way of protecting yourself from psychic, mental, or magical attack—it's a way of creating an energy barrier around yourself that other people can't penetrate. Think about the *Star Trek* series, when the Enterprise would activate its deflector shields. The magical shield works much the same way.

Remember that energy exercise you did when you learned how to center? When you ground, you push excess energy out of your body. When you shield, you envelope yourself with it. Focus on your energy core, and expand it outward so that it covers your entire body. Ideally, you'll want it to extend past the surface of your body so that it's almost as though you're walking around in a bubble. People who can see auras often recognize shielding in others—attend a metaphysical event, and you may hear someone say, "Your aura is *huge*!" It's because people who attend these events have often learned how to shield themselves from those would drain them of energy.

When you're forming your energy shield, it's a good idea to visualize the surface of it as being reflective. This not only protects you from negative influences and energy, but it can also repel them back to the original sender. Another way of looking at it is like the tinted windows on your car—it's just enough to let in sunlight and good things, but keeps all the negative away.

If you're someone who is often affected by the emotions of others—if certain people make you feel drained and exhausted by their very presence—then you need to practice shielding techniques, in addition to reading up on Magical Self Defense.

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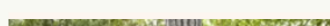
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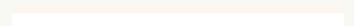
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